

BENCHMARKING ICT SECTOR COMPANIES ON RESPECT FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PRIVACY

Launch of the Ranking Digital Rights 2015 Corporate Accountability Index

rankingdigitalrights.org/index2015

4th Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva

6:15pm on Monday, 16 November 2015, Room XXIV

Background

Internet and telecommunications companies, software producers, and device and networking equipment manufacturers exert growing influence over the political and civil lives of people all over the world. These companies share a responsibility to respect human rights, including users' rights to freedom of expression and privacy.

What are the concrete policies and practices that companies should be enacting in order to respect users' digital rights? How do some of the world's most powerful ICT sector companies measure up? Ranking Digital Rights 2015 Corporate Accountability Index, launched on November 3, ranks 16 Internet and telecommunications companies on 31 indicators examining the companies' disclosed policies and practices affecting users' freedom of expression and privacy.

The Index was developed as a tool for users, civil society, investors, policymakers, and companies themselves to identify best practices. It also identifies obstacles that companies face in meeting their corporate obligations to respect human rights in the very digital spheres they helped to create and continue to shape.

The Index can be viewed online at rankingdigitalrights.org/index2015.

Download the 2015 report for offline reading at rankingdigitalrights.org/index2015/download.

Objectives

This session is intended to introduce the Ranking Digital Rights 2015 Corporate Accountability Index to a broader community of stakeholders who work on business and human rights issues, who may or may not be familiar with the emerging set of issues related to digital rights and freedoms.

In addition to describing the Index findings and recommendations for companies and other

stakeholders, we will discuss how the issues it highlights affect other business and human rights issues – not least how ICT companies' respect for digital rights can affect civil society's ability to organize and advocate on all human rights-related issues. We will also discuss how responsible investors can use the Index data and indicators, as well as how companies – including those not ranked in the 2015 Index – can use the Index' data and indicators to plan and measure progress.

Format

The session will begin with a presentation about the Index: its purpose, findings, and recommendations, followed by comments by two discussants, followed by what we intend to be a lively interactive discussion with all people in the room.

Speakers

Moderator

Amol Mehra, Director, International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR)

Speakers

Rebecca MacKinnon, Director, Ranking Digital Rights

Farnam Bidgoli, Manager, Advisory Services, Sustainalytics

Peter Micek, Global Policy and Legal Counsel, Access Now

Organizers

This event was organized by the Ranking Digital Rights project. See rankingdigitalrights.org.

Cocktail Reception at Serpentine Bar sponsored by:

Access Now (accessnow.org)

Aspiration Tech (aspirationtech.org)